AN ESSAY ON THE CHARACTER OF HAMLET.

AN ESSAY ON THE CHARACTER OF HAMLET,

AS PERFORMED

BY MR. HENDERSON,

AT THE

THEATRE-ROYAL in the HAY-MARKET.

SECOND EDITION.

"To hold as it were the mirror up to nature.——Now this o'er-
"done, or come tardy off, tho' it make the unskilful laugh,
"cannot but make the judicious grieve, the censure of which
"one must in your allowance o'er-weigh a whole theatre of
"others."

SHAKESPEAR.

LONDON,
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DEDICATION.

To GEORGE COLEMAN, Esq.

AS one of the Town I consider myself your debtor, for the unexpected addition you have made to our dramatic entertainments. The Hay-Market hitherto has been considered merely as a little Summer Retreat, the proprietor of which never furnished more than a glass of wine and a sweatmeat, but you, Sir, like a wise host, extend your plan, and beside, the light regale of Aristophanes and Fun, indulge your guests with the rich banquet

of

of Shakeſpear and ſtrong ſenſe. But I have another motive for addreſſing the following little Eſſay to you, it is to beg pardon for attempting to analyze the performance of an actor, whoſe merit was ſealed by the ſanction of your patronage. I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your moſt humble

and obedient Servant,

The AUTHOR.

AN

AN ESSAY ON THE CHARACTER OF HAMLET.

THE writings of Shakeſpear have maintained the poſt of eminence ſo long, that moſt people feign or poſſeſs ſome reliſh for them: his beauties have been acknowledged by every man of fine taſte, and his obſcurities elucidated, by the moſt ſubtle, elaborate, and learned commentators this country has produced; to venture therefore upon the inveſtigation of a ſubject, apparently exhauſted, might be as hazardous, as it ſeems barren. But though it would be preſumption in an artiſt, to deſign the model of a temple, or a palace, after a maſter in architecture, it ſurely cannot arraign his dis-

 cretion,

cretion, to fix on a ſingle column, and catch ſome minute beauty in the architrave or frieze, which may have eſcaped a mind expanded to embrace a vaſter object.

The writer of this eſſay, means to inſulate the character of Hamlet, from the other perſons of the drama; and after having conſidered the philoſophic Prince, in regard to ſituation, temper, paſſions, and underſtanding, to examine with coolneſs and impartiality, Mr. Henderſon's repreſentation of him; compare ſhade, with ſhade, and tint, with tint, then finally aſcertain the degree of conception, and execution, that gentleman exhibited in his performance.

This ſpeices of criticiſm has at leaſt novelty to recommend it; for though taſte and learning dedicate every effort to eſtabliſh the reputation, and perpetuate the memory of the poet, the actor, to whom he is often indebted for more than one laurel, is rarely honored with a leaf, to protect him from oblivion. The graces of action, the harmony of elocution, and the energy of ſoul which diſtinguiſhes the favourite of the ſiſter muſes purchaſe a tranſitory fame which periſhes with the poſſeſſor, and had Garrick

rick no perſonal intereſt with Apollo, the ſmiles of Thalia, and the favor of Melpomene, would have been a precarious tenure on immortality.

The character of Hamlet, though not the moſt finiſhed, is certainly one of the moſt ſplendid efforts of Shakeſpear's genius. He has combined in it, every circumſtance which can affect the heart, or intereſt the underſtanding. He repreſents a Prince, in the bloom of life, plunged into a deep melancholy, at the death of a father, whom he tenderly loved. The filial piety of a ſon, is finely contraſted by the levity of a mother, who in defiance of cenſure, and the ties of conſanguinity, marries her deceaſed huſband's brother.

" 'Ere yet the ſalt of moſt unrighteous tears,
" Had left the fluſhing in her gauled eyes,"

Hamlet's underſtanding is ſound, and his ſenſibility exquiſite. He is moreover adorned with every liberal accompliſhment, which can diſtinguiſh the gentleman and the ſcholar: his reaſonings are deep, and his paſſions ardent; and as both are excited by great and adequate motives, his character affords the moſt ample field for the diſplay of theatrical abilities. Such

is the contour of Hamlet, as delineated by Shakeſpear, and which he has filled with as rich and glowing colours, as ever dropped from the pencil of imagination. The appearance of a young performer in a character of this importance, muſt excite the curioſity of every admirer of the drama. But in this ſickly winter, this blight of the ſtage, when figure and voice, in general are the only ſubſtitutes for feeling, conception, and imagination; it is no wonder, every dawn of thoſe fine faculties, is received with pleaſure, and foſtered with approbation.

Mr. Henderſon, after having given infinite ſatisfaction in the character of Shylock, appeared for the firſt time in Hamlet. His ſucceſs muſt have ſurpaſſed his moſt ſanguine expectations; he deſerved, and obtained great praiſe; but in juſtice to his abilities, and in order to maintain the candour, and aſcert the dignity of taſte, it is neceſſary to examine with coolneſs, and preciſion, his performance; and judging by the ſtandards of nature and truth, pronounce where he merited cenſure, and where approbation. It has often been conteſted by theatrical polemicks, whether figure may not be diſpenſed with in an

actor

actor of real genius. It muſt be allowed, that a man of ſenſe and feeling, with a tolerable perſon, will pleaſe a judicious audience, much more than a blockhead, with beauty and grace; but in order to compleatly fill the idea, impreſſed on the mind by the poet, every youthful perſonage, that ſtands eminently forward in the drama, unleſs marked by record or tradition, with deformity, ſhould certainly poſſeſs thoſe external requiſites, which at ſight conciliate reſpect and eſteem; they augment our intereſt in the happineſs or miſery of the character, and render ſympathy more exquiſite. From the expreſs words of the poet, Hamlet ſhould have the moſt prepoſſeſſing aſpect and demeanor.

" The courtier's, ſoldier's ſcholar's eye, tongue, ſword,
" Th' expectancy and roſe of the fair ſtate
" The glaſs of faſhion, and the mould of form "

And again,

" That unmatch'd form and feature of blown youth "

Mr. Henderſon's perſon is far from ſtriking; it is rather under the middle ſize, and moulded with no extraordinary elegance, or ſymmetry. His eye is good, and all his other features, bold and marking; but his countenance ſeemed incapable

incapable of aſſuming the pathetic engaging look, which ſhould peculiarly diſtinguiſh the character; his deportment was eaſy, but not graceful; and was conſiderably injured by his appearing over ſolicitous about the diſpoſal of his hands; it is particular, and ungraceful, to confine them too much to the boſom. Mr. Henderſon's firſt impreſſion therefore was not very favorable to him. But if he appeared inadequate to the character in aſpect, and deportment, he ſoon convinced his auditors, that he was not deficient in judgment and feeling. When the Queen charges Hamlet, almoſt in direct terms, with hypocriſy, perſevering in obſtinate ſorrow, for a loſs which could not be retrieved, Mr. Henderſon delivered his pathetic reply with great ſenſibility; his look, tone, and geſture, were as well conceived, as executed, and finely marked the reſentment of a delicate, and liberal ſpirit hurt by a reproach it was conſcious of not meriting. Excellence in ſpeaking a ſoliloquy, is one of the greateſt difficulties in the art of acting. Nature is the only dictator in ſpirited and impaſſioned ſcenes, moreover in dialogue, the eye of the ſpeaker is fixed by the perſon addreſſed; but in thoſe cool deliberations which the mind holds with itſelf, when reaſon drops a curtain before the

eye

eye of ſenſe, and every external object is excluded, it is then the genius of the actor is tried, for unleſs he has a ſtrong imagination to render him thoroughly poſſeſſed of the character, united to a ſound judgment, and the happieſt powers of execution, his attention will unavoidably be ſolicited by the audience, and render his words ridiculous and unnatural. Though we cannot pronounce Mr. Henderſon excellent in this department of the hiſtrionic art, yet he was far from reprehenſible; he appeared to want practice more than judgment, and a young actor ſeldom poſſeſſes his powers at once in full flexibility. When the mind is ſtrongly agitated, the body is reſtleſs and unſettled—therefore Mr. Henderſon's walking to and fro during the time he waited to ſee his father's ſpirit was extremely natural; however we moſt earneſtly intreat him never in future to prepare us for a ſtart by pulling off his hat immediately before the appearance of the ghoſt; if he apprehends that appendage to dreſs may conceal the part of his face, where terror and anxiety are moſt ſtrongly expreſſed, let him contrive to get rid of it in his firſt confuſion; which if he cannot do with eaſe, let him remember, that in the fine arts, nothing is a beauty which militates with

nature

nature and truth. In the ſolemn addreſs to the Ghoſt, Mr. Henderſon's voice was low, tremulous, and interrupted; riſing gradually to a more confirmed tone, as his fears ſubſided: but his ejaculation to the protecting Angels of grace, was offered up before he ſaw the ſpirit; his ſucceeding pauſe was juſt and natural; for terror incites an inſtantaneous wiſh for ſafety; and it is always ſome time before the mind recovers itſelf enough to attend to any other object. There is a very capital blunder in the conduct of this ſcene, of which moſt Hamlets are guilty; when the ſpirit appears, Horatio and Marcellus, inſtead of conſulting their own ſafeties, ſeize Hamlet's arms; as if, from their prior acquaintance with the Ghoſt, they were become familiar. This is not only abſurd and unnatural, but robs the principal object of a pictureſque and ſtriking attitude. Hamlet, when firſt acquainted of the apparition, ſeems to have a precognition that his father was come to reveal ſome important ſecret; for he ſays.

"I pray you all, if you have hitherto conceal'd this ſight,
"Let it be treble in your ſilence ſtill;
"And whatſoever ſhall befall to night,
"Give it an underſtanding, but no tongue."

And

And from the following paſſage, he appears determined, in ſpite of oppoſition, to interrogate the ſpirit, and know what ſeduced him from the bourne of eternity——

" If it aſſume my noble father's perſon,
" I'll ſpeak to it, tho' hell ſhou'd gape
" And bid me hold my peace."

The apparition, inſtead of replying, continues to make repeated ſignals, as if he wiſhed to impart ſomething to Hamlet alone.——He prepares to follow, but is held by his friends; it is natural to ſuppoſe that this check muſt rather increaſe than diminiſh his anxiety; and by his own words he appears worked up to the moſt extravagant pitch of deſperation ——he declares that he does not value his life, that he thinks himſelf ſummoned by the voice of fate, and that he feels the pettieſt channel that throbs with life in his body as hardy as the Nemæan lion's nerve. Therefore during the ſtruggle to diſengage himſelf from Marcellus and Horatio, his look and geſture ſhould be wild, and his voice piercingly energic.——Mr. Henderſon fell infinitely ſhort of this conception, either from want of vivacity of paſſion, or a deficiency of power in the upper tones of his voice; his painting was

 juſt,

juſt, but not bold or maſterly; from faintneſs of colouring the effect of light and ſhade was inconſiderable, had he been more animated, the tranſition from extremity of emotion to reſpect and duty, when he bids the ghoſt proceed, would have had a prodigious fine effect.—— Short as this ſcene is, Garrick's excellence in it was aſtoniſhing; he preſerved Shakeſpear's fire undiminiſhed, faithful as the electric, and ſent the animated ſhock of nature's flame home to the heart.——It is to be regretted that a young performer of Mr. Henderſon's abilities can never behold this great model of Theatrical Perfection; for men of real genius profit from each other, without deſcending to the ſervility of imitation.—— During the ſubſequent ſcene with the Ghoſt, Mr. Henderſon was every thing that criticiſm could wiſh; but if he would obſerve the minutiæ of propriety, he would drop his ſword when the ſpirit tells him that he is his father; hitherto he had but preſumptive proofs.

It muſt be confeſſed that this is a piece of ſtage etiquette, which may be complied or diſpenſed with AD LIBITUM; and perhaps it never would have been noticed by the writer of this eſſay, but for the extraordinary ingenuity of

of a news-paper Drawcanſir, who moſt ſagaciouſly remarked, in one of his daily critique's, that Hamlet's promiſing to revenge his father's death after he had dropped his ſword, was abſurd, judiciouſly ſuppoſing that he could not take it up again.

From the diſappearing of the Ghoſt to the cloſe of the firſt act, there are few opportunities for the diſplay of ſuperior talents. Mr. Henderſon ſpoke the ſoliloquy previous to the entry of Horatio and Marcellus, with great feeling and propriety, and preſerved a beauty in this ſpeech which is either loſt or rendered ridiculous by the generality of performers; it is Hamlet's taking his tablets out, in order to ſet down—

"That man may ſmile, and ſmile and be a villain."

This is an action ſtrong emotion may dictate, but which nothing elſe can authorize. Therefore, if the actor be not animated, it will paſs unnoticed, or appear like the flight of a lunatic. Mr. Henderſon felt, and nature ſuſtained no injury. At the concluſion of the firſt act, Hamlet becomes a new character, determined on avenging the murder of his father, and juſtly alarmed for his own ſafety, he

aſſumes the maſk of inſanity, to conceal his intentions, and lull the ſuſpicions of the king his uncle. There is no part of acting more difficult to exhibit, than that of madneſs. It requires great flexibility of voice, and countenance, to expreſs the rapid ſucceſſion of images, that float acroſs a diſtracted fancy. The eye ſhould be wild, yet vacant, and the tones piercing. It is true, Hamlet's madneſs is feigned; but it is evident from the following lively deſcription, that the poet meant, it ſhould be counterfeited with great ſtrength of imagination and maſterly touches of nature.—

" My Lord as I was ſewing in my cloſet
" Lord Hamlet with his doublet all unbraced
" No hat upon his head, his ſtockings looſe,
" Ungartered, and down gyred to his ankle,
" Pale as his ſhirt, his knees knocking each other
" And with a look ſo piteous, in purport,
" As if he had been looſed out of hell
" To ſpeak of horrors, thus he comes, before me."

In the firſt ſcene with Polonius, Mr. Henderſon would have been unexceptionable, had he paid more regard to a ſtriking and pictureſque manner. He looked, and conceived the poet juſtly, but diminiſhed the fine effect his diſordered appearance would have had, by inattention to attitude and grace. There never

was

was perhaps a more admirable deſcription of a rooted melancholy, than the relation Hamlet gives to Roſincraus and Guildenſtern, of the progreſs of his diſtemper. It riſes with ſtriking and noble images, in grand ſucceſſion to an aſtoniſhing pitch of ſublimity. The laſt objection made to Mr. Henderſon, ſtands here alſo againſt him. His tones and manner had not the correſpondent weight, which the majeſty of the ſentiments he uttered required. If he delivered this ſpeech leſs rapidly, and made a ſhort pauſe previous to the words—

"What a piece of work is man,"

it would have had a much better effect. In his ſcene with the players he was eaſy, ſenſible and ſpirited; and gave the charge to them, as well, perhaps, as any man who ever performed the character.—It is painful to point out blemiſhes, where many beauties are to be met with. But the parterre will be ſoon over-run, if the weeds are ſuffered to remain, leſt the act of removing them ſhould lacerate the flowers.—Hamlet is ſtung with ſhame, to ſee a player, by the force of imagination, deeply affected, for the calamities of a perſon who has been dead for centuries, and naturally aſks, "what would ſuch a man do, had he motives to ſtir the cauſe of vengeance which he himſelf had.

In

In enumerating them, his paſſion kindles, till he becomes frantic with rage. Mr. Henderſon wanted fire and rapidity. In reaſoning upon the imagination of the player, and his own tardineſs to revenge, he was ſtriking and natural, but his indignation was not vented with the energy of ſtrong paſſion. When the mind is ſhook with violent anger, every ſentence is uttered in the higheſt key of the voice. It is the native tone of rage, and if the performer cannot reach it, he comes tardy of the poet's conception. Mr. Henderſon never employs the upper key, which we are inclined to attribute to want of judgment rather than to want of genius. Rant conſiſts in the miſapplication, not in the great exertion of the voice. For in the impaſſioned part of this ſpeech, every word Mr. Garrick utters, ſeems to ruſh from the burning mint of ſenſibility; which proves, that the loudeſt extent of voice will not offend, when the heart replies to it in ſympathy. Mr. Henderſon laid a glaring falſe emphaſis in this ſpeech. In repeating

> " What is Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,
> " That he ſhould weep for her?"

he puts the ſtreſs upon HER, though there is no antitheſis. Hamlet is not ſurpriſed at the player's

player's weeping for Hecuba in PARTICULAR, but that he ſhou'd weep for any perſon, with whom he was utterly unconnected; if this paſſage be received as Mr. Henderſon ſpoke it, one would be apt to conclude, that there was ſomething in the miſeries of Hecuba, which excluded her from compaſſion.

The third act opens with the celebrated ſoliloquy upon ſuicide. Hamlet, weary of being obliged to procraſtinate his revenge, and ſick of the calamities of life, from which he ſaw no rank or condition to be exempted, reflects which ſhould be preferred in adverſity, exiſtence or death * the magnitude of this ſubject gives great

* Warburton, in his comment upon this ſoliloquy from a happy facility, he often diſplays of ſophiſticating the ſenſe of the cleareſt paſſages, gives a ſtrange turn to Shakeſpear's meaning. He interprets to be or not to be, am I to exiſt hereafter or not? Hamlet at firſt appears ſatisfied that he would not, for he aſks, is it nobler to endure calamity or end it by death? This leads him to conſider the nature of death, which he concludes to be a ſleep, a privation from feeling, a tomb in which life and ſufferance were both buried. He afterward hazards a conjecture that there may be dreams in this ſleep, and that the dread of them muſt certainly prevent the wretched putting a period to their exiſtence. But there is one circumſtance which has eſcaped the learned commentator,

great ſcope to an actor of genius. Mr. Henderſon appeared in every reſpect equal to it; his words and action ſeemed to flow from deep and ſtrong thinking; and both were regulated by the ſtricteſt rules of taſte and judgment. Hamlet's meditations are interrupted by the preſence of Ophelia. He addreſſes her at firſt, with gentleneſs and delicacy. But recollecting the character he had to ſuſtain, he ſtarts wildly from the point, and under the ſhelter of frenzy, vents the keeneſt ſatyr againſt the ſex in general. Here Mr. Henderſon was too tame. He ſhould remember, that though there be truth, and ſtrong ſenſe in what he ſays, that he is ſtill the mad-man; and that unleſs his look and manner be wild, and his utterance rapid, he will be diſcovered. No actor will perform this ſcene well, without a fine imagination, to catch the enthuſiaſm of the poet; and out of love to the expiring genius of the ſtage, we hope Mr. Henderſon poſſeſſes it. It would be tedious

tor, why ſhould Hamlet doubt the ſeparate exiſtence of the ſoul after having ſeen and converſed with his father's ſpirit? Johnſon remarks upon this ſpeech that the prince enumerate evils to which the lower orders of life only were ſubject. But Hamlet does not adduce them as cauſes for his own diſguſt with the world. They are merely the obſervations of a ſpeculative mind touched with the miſeries of human nature.

and

and unneceſſary to dwell upon paſſages which any performer of good ſenſe may execute without incurring cenſure, or extorting applauſe. We ſhall confine our obſervations to thoſe parts alone where excellence may be diſplayed. From the king's confuſion at the murder of Gonzago, Hamlet is convinced of his guilt. His doubts therefore are removed, reſpecting the veracity of the ghoſt, and he determines upon revenge the firſt opportunity. Upon finding the king at prayers, he is about to put him to death; but recollecting that it was not in the moment of contrition, he killed his father, that he took him, full of bread,

"With all his crimes, broad blown, as fluſh as May."

he reſolves to defer his vengeance to the unprepared hour of pleaſure and debauch. This principal link, being omitted in the repreſentation, and no other cauſe ſubſtituted, for Hamlet's continuing to procraſtinate, he appears weak and inconſiſtent, during the laſt two acts. At the private interview Hamlet has with his mother, Mr. Henderſon was rather too boiſterous and irreverent to a queen and his parent. A liberal mind will preſerve delicacy, even in reproaches. In ſpeaking,

" You are the queen, your husband's, brother's wife,
" Wou'd it were not so; you are my mother,

he pauses after the words, " Your husband's, brother's wife," and by uttering the rest of the passage in one continued tone, perverts the sense, appearing to desire, that the queen was not his mother, when the poet means he should wish, that she was not married to his uncle. This interpretation of the passage is sanctified, not only by Hamlet's general character, but by his own words. Notwithstanding the incontinence of his mother, he constantly betrays the tenderness of a son, and feels for her weakness as a woman.

" O heart, lose not thy nature; let not ever
" The soul of Nero enter this firm bosom;
" Let me be cruel, but not unnatural,
" 'Twill speak daggers to her, but use none."

Hamlet's producing the picture of his father and his uncle, is a happy and affecting incident; but we think Mr. Henderson's conception, in one part of it, erroneous. When the pious prince dwells upon the personal beauty of his father, and contrasts it with the deformity of his uncle, admiration, not grief, is the predomi-

predominant paſſion; ſorrow chills the fancy, and the following images appear to be the offspring of the moſt glowing imagination.—

" An eye, like Mars, to threaten or command,
" A ſtation like the herald Mercury;
" New lighted on a heaven-kiſſing hill,
" A combination, and a form indeed;
" Where ev'ry God had ſet his ſeal,
" To give the world aſſurance of a man.

Imagery rich as this, requires a firm animated tone of grandeur. But Mr. Henderſon's voice broke into a boyiſh whimper, which not a ſyllable he had to utter could juſtify, or dictate. Throwing away the king's picture, ſavours rather of trick; beſides it does not ſeem to augment our ſenſibility. Mr. Henderſon's terror was finely expreſſed upon the appearance of the ghoſt; his voice, countenance and attitude, conſpired with united force to ſtrike us with awe, pity, and admiration; and if he would avoid the errors hinted at, his cloſet ſcene would be a moſt capital piece of acting.—One of the principal defects in this tragedy, is the almoſt total excluſion of Hamlet from the fourth act; ſo long loſing ſight of the chief perſonage in the drama, our intereſt for him is diminiſhed: as the piece was originally written, Hamlet has

three ſcenes in the fourth act, but two of which are retained, though the third contains a moſt beautiful ſoliloquy, in which Hamlet juſtifies himſelf, for ſuſpending the revenge he promiſed his father. In Mr. Garrick's alteration this ſpeech is preſerved. The opening of the fifth act is ſtained with low ribaldry, but ſo intimately connected with ſtriking beauties, that it would be impoſſible to expunge the one without loſing the other. Hamlet's reflections upon the laſt humiliating ſtate of human nature, are awful and affecting, particularly thoſe upon the ſkull of Yorick, when he beholds the ſad disfigured remains, of a man who was once dear to him, mouldring into duſt, hideous with deformity, the food and habitation of the worm; but the genius of Shakeſpear penetrated all nature, and his voice is heard from the tomb. We were ſurprized and chagrined, to find Mr. Henderſon fell ſhort of our expectations in this ſcene. His expreſſion was languid and unimpaſſioned. He appeared over ſolicitous to give force and ſolemnity to his manner, and in the attempt loſt the fine ſpirit of the poet. In uttering the rant into which Hamlet breaks at Ophelia's funeral, Mr. Henderſon diſtorts the ſenſe of one line by a falſe emphaſis. Laertes, when his

ſiſter's

ſiſter's obſequies are nearly finiſhed, overcome with ſorrow, leaps into her grave, and cries,

" Now heap your mountains on the quick and dead,"

deſiring, in the extravagance of grief, to be interred alive with one ſo dear to him. Hamlet, whoſe affection for Ophelia was not leſs ardent, challenges him to give a proof of ſuperior tenderneſs, and after propoſing the wildeſt teſts which frenzy could dictate, ſays,

' BE buried quick with her and ſo will I."

As this was a propoſal of Laertes, not Hamlet, the emphatical word undoubtedly is the monoſylable BE. Mr. Henderſon does not obſerve this emphaſis, therefore from his tone we would conclude that Laertes had not, prior to Hamlet, deſired to be interred with Ophelia, but that this thought was originally the latter's, and only in the climas of extravagant images which burſt from him in the effervescence of imagination. When Oſtrick cries a hit, a palpable hit; Laertes' point is at Hamlet's breaſt, owing to Mr. Henderſon's ignorance of the ſword. Fencing is an accompliſhment, not to be diſpenſed with in an actor; and nothing ſo much promotes grace-

fulneſs

fulneſs of deportment. Mr. Henderſon's dying ſcene was capital, it appeared indeed the laſt ſtruggle of the ſpirit, when life hangs quivering to a point, and death extinguiſhes it.—

Having thus progreſſively traced Mr. Henderſon through the character of Hamlet, and remarked with equal candour upon his merits and imperfections; we muſt pronounce him, notwithſtanding ſome blemiſhes, the beſt performer now left to ſupport the drooping trophies of the ſtage. He poſſeſſes taſte, feeling and good ſenſe; and though not bleſſed by nature with that portion of ætherial fire, which alone could once purchaſe him eminence on the ſtage, he muſt always maintain the ſuperiority of men, who in general are indebted to accident, perſon, or intereſt, for their ſituations.

Is it not ridiculous and diſguſting to hear a man without an atom of feeling draul out in one uniform, unvaried tone, the moſt pointed obſervation or lively paſſion? Is it not monſtrous to behold another with the ſepulchral aſpect of an undertaker, and a voice as diſmal as the hooting of the owl warbling out

Romeo,

Romeo, and putting Shakeſpear to death? But what is infinitely, if poſſible, more prepoſterous, we are ſometimes obliged to bear a man, whoſe enormous bulk and drouſy eye would incline us to believe, that he had better taſte in Calipaſh and Calipee, than in delicacy of ſentiment, and reſembles an alderman or a butcher more than a lover or a hero*. For heaven's ſake, does a manager ever purchaſe actors by the pound, that he will employ ſuch people? We congratulate the public upon their acquiſition in Mr. Henderſon, and hope his genius will protect us at leaſt in part from like mortifications in future.

* This GREAT man, who for ſome time added conſiderable WEIGHT to the Edinburgh ſtage, was one night to doze thro' a capital character, in which he expected to infuſe more of the poppy than uſual; but a wag who was ſenſible that no man contributed ſo much as himſelf to the repoſe of an audience, politely inſerted at the bottom of the bills:

N. B. Gentlemen are requeſted to bring night-caps.

FINIS.